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SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS

COOPERATION WITH THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Note by the secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP 1), at its first session, by its decision 4/CP.1* on methodological issues, decided that the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) should propose a work plan and timetable for longer-term activities relating to methodological questions (including inventory methodologies and methodologies for analysing impacts and mitigation options) and the establishment of working relations with other bodies (in particular the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)) and its working groups and programmes.

2. The COP also invited the relevant international organizations and bodies, including the IPCC, to contribute to the work of the SBSTA, especially on the scientific aspects of methodologies, particularly those relating to inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, global warming potentials of those greenhouse gases, vulnerability assessment and adaptation, projections of emissions by sources and removals by sinks, the evaluation of the effects of measures undertaken pursuant to the provisions of the Convention and the allocation and control of emissions from international bunker fuels.

3. Further, in its decision 6/CP.1, the COP invited the officers of the SBSTA and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to submit, after due consultation with their respective bodies, proposals for future cooperation between the SBSTA and the SBI and the IPCC, to the second session of the Conference of the Parties. The SBI, at its first session, decided that, in order to avoid duplication of effort, cooperation between the subsidiary bodies of the Convention and the IPCC should be addressed by the SBSTA and without prejudice to paragraph 6 of decision 6/CP.1 (FCCC/SBI/1995/5, para. 17).

4. At its first session, the SBSTA expressed strong support for the continued functioning of the IPCC as one of the independent and prominent sources of scientific and technical information relevant to the implementation of the Convention, as specified in Article 9 of the Convention (FCCC/SBSTA/1995/3, para. 24). It also identified a list of areas in which it could draw upon the assistance of the IPCC in order to provide the COP with timely information and advice on relevant scientific and technical issues. The list was preliminary and general and subject to modifications, refinements and additions (FCCC/SBSTA/1995/3, annex).

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* For decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its first session, see document FCCC/CP/1995/Add.1.

5. The SBSTA also noted the need to identify short- and long-term requirements and requested its Bureau to hold joint meetings with the relevant officers of the IPCC and report to each of its sessions on the outcome of these meetings. In this context the SBSTA envisaged the need for scientific and technical advice from the IPCC on special emerging topics to be made available within short periods of time (perhaps one year or so). It agreed therefore that there would be a need for close coordination between the SBSTA and the IPCC in identifying more specific proposals for jointly agreed tasks and considering such matters as time-frames for implementation and financial implications, including contributions to the IPCC from the Convention budget. It felt that this would be particularly important after the consideration by the SBSTA of the IPCC Second Assessment Report at which time the secretariat should prepare a list of priority areas and propose time-frames in which inputs from the IPCC would be required for the future work of the SBSTA. The SBSTA would keep the agenda item "Cooperation with competent international bodies including the IPCC" under regular review (FCCC/SBSTA/1995/3, para. 24).

B. Scope of the note

6. This note briefly reports on the first meeting of the Joint Working Group of Officers of the Convention and the IPCC, which was held in Geneva on 27 October 1995, and refers to the second meeting to be held on 25 February 1996. Further, the note mentions the main conclusions of the IPCC on its future work plan, as agreed at the eleventh session of the IPCC in Rome in December 1995. The Joint Working Group will discuss these conclusions on 25 February 1996 and seek to develop a common view on the contributions that the IPCC may make to the Convention process in the coming years. The note also indicates possible action by the SBSTA. The annex to this note provides some information on the IPCC programme for inventory methodologies.

II. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

7. The IPCC has been the main source of scientific inputs for the Convention process. The process was only formally launched in late 1990 after the First Assessment Report of the IPCC had been completed earlier that year. Article 21.2 of the Convention recognizes the role of the IPCC in responding to the need for objective scientific and technological advice.

8. The importance of scientific assessment of the Convention process cannot be overstated. It is the scientific findings on climate change that interest the public and that motivate political and economic responses. At the same time, scientific uncertainty is a mitigating force, limiting the environmental drive of the Convention process. More and better scientific information and assessment reinforce the political resolve to implement and strengthen the Convention. The adaptation of scientific information for use by the public information media contributes to this end.

9. In the light of the IPCC Second Assessment Report, it is clear that much scientific work still lies ahead to better define the problems involved in climate change, to expand the

range of options and to reduce uncertainty. Emphasis may need to be placed in future work on defining the impacts of climate change and on developing innovative low cost solutions. At the same time, as these issues approach real political choices, it will be important to keep the scientific process distinct from politics. This means that the frontier between the scientific/technical assessments of the IPCC and the political process of the Convention needs to be carefully monitored. What is fundamental, however, is that the IPCC has the mandate and resources to continue its work and that it be allowed to do so in a way that leaves its scientific integrity and credibility unimpaired. The Joint Working Group could address any questions which may arise on these fundamental issues, and, if necessary, bring them to the attention of the relevant body or bodies.

III. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

10. The IPCC considered its future work programme at its eleventh plenary session, held in Rome from 11 to 15 December 1995. The session endorsed, with some amendments, the proposals presented by the Chairman of the IPCC in document IPCC-X1/Doc. 7. The IPCC intends to prepare a Third Assessment Report, beginning around 1998 and aiming for completion around 2000. The reports of the Working Groups could possibly be released sequentially, for example at 6 to 9 months intervals. In the interim, a series of Special Reports could be prepared. These would be on topics that would be helpful to the Third Assessment Report, or, in a general way, to the Convention process; their completion should take 12 to 18 months and would follow the IPCC procedures. The IPCC Special Report of 1994 could be regarded as an example. For the shorter term, the IPCC could also prepare Technical Papers on request from the Convention bodies; these reports would be based on material already in the IPCC Assessment Reports. Further, the IPCC would organize workshops, and continue its work on methodologies for inventories.

11. The activities for 1996 and 1997 include:

(a) Technical Papers (drawing mainly upon the Second Assessment Report)

The IPCC Bureau would initiate Technical Papers responding to requests from the SBSTA in 1996, after consultation between the Joint Working Group and the Bureau of the SBSTA. The Papers could be on:

- Technology transfer (from the contribution of Working Group II to the Second Assessment Report)
- Impacts (scientific, economic, and environmental) of climate change and of response measures with emphasis on developing countries
- Scenarios and pathways to stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations
- Simple climate models

The IPCC also adopted procedures for drafting, reviewing, finalizing and releasing the Technical Papers.

(b) **Special Reports (assessing new scientific information on specific topics)**

Any work on Special Reports would have to be approved by the IPCC twelfth plenary session scheduled for September 1996. However, the following were suggested, *inter alia*, as subject matters for Special Reports:

- Simple climate models
- Global stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations
- Aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem vulnerability
- Risk of instabilities

(c) **Workshops**

(i) The IPCC would organize workshops on the following topics in 1996:

- Regional climate prediction
- Landuse and biomass (related to work on methodologies for greenhouse gas inventories)
- Methane from rice (related to work on methodologies for greenhouse inventories)

(ii) The IPCC Bureau would consider ways and means to organize workshops (aiming at cooperation with other organizations) on the following topics:

- Integrated assessments models
- Comparison of top-down/bottom-up emissions inventories
- Projections/scenario methodologies for the IPCC Third Assessment Report
- Methodologies for economic/social impact assessment in developing countries
- Methodologies for estimating climate change damages
- Oceans/coral reefs and roles in the carbon cycle
- Adaptation

(d) **Programme on inventory methodologies**

12. Of particular interest was the decision that work on methodologies for greenhouse gas inventories should continue at full capacity in 1996 and 1997. This will allow incorporation of the new information on emission factors that is underway, particularly from developing countries. It will also allow the development of methodologies that can be applied in an as wide as possible range of countries. Some details of the programme are given in the annex to this document. The IPCC will review the programme at its 1997 session and decide on further work. Cooperation with the Convention will be an important feature of the programme.

IV. MEETINGS OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

13. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group was held on 27 October 1995. It was attended by the Chairmen of the SBSTA and the IPCC, by other officers of the FCCC and IPCC and by members of the secretariats. Discussions focused on the initial list of items identified by the SBSTA at its first session (see paragraph 4 above), on the IPCC inventories and methodologies programme, on the Second Assessment Report and on future IPCC reports. The meeting also identified a number of areas where a measure of priority attention was considered necessary. These comprise:

(a) The IPCC Synthesis Report on information relevant to the implementation of Article 2 of the Convention

(b) The inventories and methodologies programme

(c) Technology transfer

(d) Socio-economic impacts of climate change and impacts of response measures

(e) Adaptation measures

14. The second meeting of the Joint Working Group is scheduled to take place on 25 February 1996. The Chairman of the SBSTA will brief the SBSTA on the meetings of the Group, with particular reference to its second meeting. The Chairman of the IPCC will also address the SBSTA.

V. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

15. A new aspect of the relationship with the IPCC arises from the approved Convention budget for 1996-1997, which provides for a contribution towards the costs of services rendered to the Convention process. This provision is intended to help the IPCC respond to specific requests from the COP or its subsidiary bodies. An amount of some US$ 620.000 has been provided for the biennium, assuming that the Convention budget is fully subscribed. It is envisaged that, on the basis of conclusions from the SBSTA with respect to cooperation with the IPCC and with the help of the IPCC secretariat, the Convention secretariat will provide information on financial aspects of the cooperation to the third meeting of the SBI so that it can advise the COP.

VI. POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

16. The SBSTA may wish:

(a) To consider and endorse the conclusions of the Joint Working Group of Officers of the SBSTA and the IPCC, as will be reported by the Chairman of the SBSTA, and to welcome the continuing work programme of the IPCC during the period 1996-1997 in the area of methodologies for greenhouse gas inventories;

(b) To request the secretariat to prepare a long-term programme on methodologies, as required by decision 4/CP.1 of the COP, taking the IPCC activities into account;

(c) To invite the IPCC to work closely with the Convention secretariat and the intergovernmental technical advisory panel, once established, in relevant areas, inter alia, as concerns methodologies for inventories to be used by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention and non-Annex I Parties, in preparing national communications, and technological issues;

(d) To request the Joint Working Group to consider the list of priority areas identified by the SBSTA and propose timetables within which inputs from the IPCC would be required for the future work of the SBSTA, on the basis of information prepared by the Convention secretariat (see paragraph 5 above);

(e) To request the IPCC to continue its work on Article 2 of the Convention, as follow-up to its Synthesis Report, including the possible convening of a special workshop to review and discuss the main findings and/or difficulties;

(f) To request the Chairman of the SBSTA to continue his activities with respect to the Joint Working Group, with a view to further refining and adjusting the working arrangements between the Convention bodies and the IPCC, and report back regularly to the SBSTA.

17. The SBSTA may also wish to consider acting upon the suggestion included in the document on the Second Assessment Report, that it invites the IPCC, its parent bodies (the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme) and the Convention secretariat to collaborate in disseminating information from the SAR, in such a manner as to facilitate its absorption by different audiences, including the public information media (FCCC/SBSTA/1996/7, para. 29).

Annex

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME ON NATIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORIES

Specific elements of the 1996-1997 work programme undertaken by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in close cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Energy Agency, include:

- Completing the work of the 1995 expert groups by issuing revised Guidelines as needed
- Development of revised emission factors for methane from rice and land use change and forestry
- Developing country capacity building in coordination and evaluation of activities on the IPCC Guidelines
- Development of other recommendations for the IPCC Guidelines

This programme covers completion of products from the existing expert groups* by 1996 and includes initiating work on methane emissions from rice production. A workshop on methane from rice would be convened in early 1996 to review methane emission factors.

The proposals are summarized in the table below. The time-frame for the activities is shown in the attached figure.

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* The products of the existing expert groups include methods for: "new gases" and other gases from industrial processes; N_2O and CO_2 from agricultural soils; and revisions to methods for land use change and forestry, waste, and fuel combustion.

**IPCC PROGRAMME ON NATIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORIES:
PHASE II EXTENSION UNTIL THE END OF 1997**

Activity	Product
Core support	IPCC staff unit (housed in the OECD) to support all activities of the Inventories Programme
Revision of IPCC Guidelines (completion of the work of the 1995 expert groups by issuing revised Guidelines in five specific areas)	Stand-alone IPCC Guidelines revisions (in English; French; Spanish; Russian). Based on the expert group work which was initiated in 1995.* Includes distribution, assimilation of comments; editing and publication; translation (3 languages only)
Development of revised emission factors for methane from rice and land use change and forestry -Methane from rice -Land use change and forestry	Recommendations to be developed following in 1996 and 1997 IPCC workshops aimed to review recent information; possible preparation of IPCC Guidelines revisions (English only)
Developing country capacity building in coordination and evaluation of activities on the IPCC Guidelines	Summary report -- to be produced by a visiting developing country scientist residing at the OECD
Development of other recommendations to improve overall Guideline methodologies	Recommendations/workshop report to be drawn up following a 1997 IPCC workshop aimed at reviewing experience and new information emerging from all countries Budget does not include full IPCC review or production of revisions to the Guidelines

* Includes methods for "new gases" and other gases form industrial processes; N_2O and CO_2 from agricultural soils; and revisions to land use change and forestry, waste and fuel combustion methods.

IPCC WORK PROGRAMME 1996 - 1997 - TIMETABLE